

nor is it worth while to disentangle them. What concerns us is that Disraeli at the age of twenty had incurred a debt of several thousand pounds, a debt which was not finally liquidated till nearly thirty years later, when he had already led the House of Commons and been Chancellor of the Exchequer. The * rascal counters' were thrown into the scale against him, and his folly or misfortune on this occasion was the beginning of financial embarrassments by which he was tormented through a great portion of his career.

When they began their operations Disraeli and Evans were speculating for the fall; they reversed their tactics and became 'bulls,' most unluckily just at the moment when the market was losing its buoyancy. Their first instinctive judgment of the financial situation had been sound, though their action had been premature, and the change of view and tactics may have been owing to the influence of a man who now for a time plays an important part in the life of Disraeli. Mr. John Diston Powles was the head of a financial house which had been reaping a rich harvest from the boom, and whose credit was deeply involved in its continuance and justification. The firm had promoted several mining companies with large capital, and to two of these, including one, the Anglo-Mexican Mining Association, which had become the focus of great speculative excitement, Messrs. Swain and Stevens were solicitors. In this way, perhaps, it came about that young Disraeli made the acquaintance of Mr. Powles, and, with an extraordinary power which he already possessed of influencing men, even of years and standing far greater than his own, he appears speedily to have won his way into the counsels and confidence of the financier, and the two formed a close alliance. Disraeli possibly thought he had found the road to a great position in the world of finance, and to the fortune of which he was in quest; Powles, on the other hand, no doubt saw that his young confederate's glowing imagination, ready pen, and connexion through John Murray with the